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The Lodi arch has long been a symbol of our town. Constructed in 1907, the arch welcomed newcomers as they arrived at the Lodi depot.

How Lodi Derived Its Name

by Maurice Hill

What's in a name? As early as 1865, the small group of settlers found in this vicinity spoke of their location as Mokelumne or the Mokelumne District.

It was no surprise then when the early settlers Ayers, Lawrence, Magley and Wardrobe petitioned the Central Pacific Railroad company to create a station on their land in the center of a 160 acre townsite to be called Mokelumne. This became a fact on August 25, 1869.

The town started to develop and grow the first few years after 1869, but there was some confusion and difficulty in delivering mail and railway shipments. The post office used the name Mokelumne, but the Wells Fargo and the railroad agents used Mokelumne Station. To the east, in the

center of the gold mining area, was the town of Mokelumne Hill and to the northwest, near the intersection of Dry Creek and the Mokelumne River, lay the town of Mokelumne City. In addition, there was difficulty in spelling "Mokelumne" and criticism ensued.

In 1873, a petition was circulated to obtain names of those in favor of changing the town's name. Enough names were secured to have the townspeople appoint a committee to select a new and shorter name.

Mr. C. O. Ivory, first store owner and Wells Fargo agent, started using the name Lodi at the top of the page in his daily cash book for May 16, 1873. Wells Fargo cancellations after July 1, 1873 stopped using "Mokelumne Station" in favor of "Lodi." The post office, the one most directly affected, was unable to change until it was officially legal on

March 26, 1874.

There are a number of stories regarding the choice of Lodi as a name for the town. There are residents of Lodi who believe that their city was named after Lodi, Illinois, as there were eighteen towns in the U.S.A. by that name as early as 1900.

Elliott E. Morse, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo M. Morse, early settlers in the Lodi area, has been quoted as having said, "My uncle, Charles C. Elliott, who for many years was a United States marshal, called a mass meeting in Hill's Hall for residents to vote upon a name for the town. After making a plea for the town in Illinois, Lodi was selected."

The meeting could not have taken place in Hill's Hall in 1873 as the upper floor of the Hill building was not added until 1888. It was then used as

a wagon shop until fitted up as a hall in 1896.

There are some points in favor of the credibility of the above version, which might be considered seriously if there was evidence to confirm it.

It is understandable that prominent early settlers, such as the Morses and Elliotts, coming from one Lodi in the east, would wish to start a new Lodi in the west. It is also reasonable that residents in Mokelumne would listen respectfully to a plea made by Mr. Elliott and give it due consideration.

One of the two most publicized stories asserts that Lodi was named for a well-known race horse of the period. In the files of *"Thoroughbreds of California"* magazine, it states that the race horse, Lodi, was the undisputed champion of the 1860's. The horse was owned by Judge H. C. Bryan, who obtained the same from E. M. Skaggs.

The Lodi District Chamber of Commerce once issued a brochure telling of a group of Mokelumne people, including Asa Van Valkenburgh, John Hutchins and Allen T. Ayers watching a race in Sacramento's Union Park where "Lodi" was victorious. The eastern horse "Norfolk" was brought to California to race the state champion "Lodi". The champ put up a game race, losing by a small margin after sustaining a severe quarter crack in his right forehoof and blood spurting all the way home. The crowd cheered for the game racer "Lodi".

From the *Woodbridge Messenger* dated December 16, 1865, it is known that the racing stallion "Lodi" was sold to Nathan Combs of Napa for the sum of either \$5,700 or \$41,000 (the same article quotes both figures) and was retired to his farm for breeding purposes. Thus, by 1873, when the name of "Lodi" was selected for the town of Mokelumne, the horse would have been out of the public mind.

The town may not have been named for a horse, but later a horse was named for the town. Ernest Ferdun, rancher and attorney born in the Lodi area in 1876, stated that his father, Samuel Ferdun, who resided here in 1851, told him about a foal that was born at the old Morse Ranch, where race horses were bred. The colt was an awkward animal with very long legs.

Jim Peirano, leading grocer, was at the Morse place at this time and he was given the colt, which turned out to be a good race horse.

Ernest Ferdun recalled that, while a small boy, he attended the State Fair at Sacramento and saw this same colt, which had been named "Lodi" by Jim Peirano, run in the race.

A painting of a gallant horse, "Lodi", displayed at the Lodi Public Library, was owned by a Sacramento man who presented the picture to Dr. John M. Blodgett.

There were prominent early Lodians who believed Lodi was named for the race horse. C. O. Ivory favored this story as did Arthur Levinsky, lawyer, who thought Lodi was named for a race horse which was locally owned.

Before a plaque giving an account of the naming of Lodi after a race horse was erected, Maurice Hill, local historian, was contacted for data con-

"...The name was suggested by the historic event of Napoleon at the Bridge of Lodi."

firming the facts. Even though he mentioned that there was no definite proof in support of this belief, the plaque was placed in front of the City Hall on June 21, 1955.

Granted that the race horse story is a good one, but is it true?

The story connecting the name of Lodi with the Battle at the Bridge of Lodi, Italy, has an equal number of ardent supporters.

Miss Anna McKenzie relates, in her history of the Lodi region, that it required two years to build the railroad bridge across the Mokelumne River. Because the engineers and workers had to fight the sands and current from 1867 to 1869, it was like a great battle and it made some people think of the Bridge of Lodi, which is across a little river in Italy.

The most widely known of the "Bridge of Lodi" stories is in connection with two English brothers, Robert

and Richard Cope. The former was a cobbler and the latter a harnessmaker. For years, many Lodians believed that these brothers were instrumental in changing the name of Mokelumne to Lodi. One of the foremost supporters of this claim, and the one most often quoted, was John Blakely, Lodi's former city clerk, who was long known as "Mr. Lodi" because of his longstanding service to the city. In 1900, as editor of the Lodi High School annual, he wrote an article descriptive in character of Lodi, Italy and the dramatic event which took place at the nearby Bridge of Lodi. The article also included a comparison between the far-off Lodi and our own city. Both have similar climate and the inhabitants are the descendants of the strongest and noblest races.

Maurice Hill interviewed Mr. Blakeley in his later years and he still maintained his point of view in regard to the naming of Lodi, although he could not prove the point without a question. However, as a boy, he lived next door to Richard Cope, who told him that he was the one who gave Lodi its name.

Robert and Richard Cope were both educated men. Born in England, they had a good knowledge of European history. They were both in business in Woodbridge when Mokelumne was laid out as a town. Among the first few to move into the new village, they would have had knowledge of the building of the railroad bridge and the difficulties encountered. It has been reported that both brothers were great admirers of Napoleon and the almost unsurmountable difficulties met by him and his brave soldiers at the Bridge of Lodi, Italy. It is logical that the brothers would have wished to perpetuate the name of Lodi in the village which was in search of a new name.

Another supporter of this story that Lodi received its name from the Italian source was George E. Lawrence, Lodi's first mayor. His father, Ezekiel Lawrence, was one of the area's earliest settlers, in the northwest part of our city.

Mr. Lawrence, when speaking before the Lodi Lion's Club in 1927, stated that Lodi received its name because of the great difficulties en-

countered in building the railroad bridge across the Mokelumne River. The river would rise frequently and sweep away the work already accomplished. The obstacles overcome were comparable to those encountered at the Bridge of Lodi, Italy.

The most important find in regard to clearing the long-standing controversy is a short history of Lodi by W. H. Lawrence, brother of first mayor George and son of Ezekiel, in the *Lodi Cyclone*, published by Gertie DeForce Cluff. This series of articles, dated November, 1885, only twelve years after the name change, and with all or nearly all the figures mentioned in naming Lodi still living, gave him an unequalled opportunity for getting the facts first hand. William Lawrence, in his first article, states that Richard Cope, Judge A. C. Meeker, Daniel Crist and J. U. Magley held a conference for the purpose of choosing a name in lieu of Mokelumne Station. There were already two Mokelumnes, which caused much confusion in transportation. J. U. Magley proposed the name of Salem, but the other members of the conference were unanimously in favor of Lodi.

The article asserts: Many labor under the idea that the name of Lodi was suggested by a famous race horse of that name, which was owned in the state at the time and bore a world-wide reputation. The idea is erroneous. Lodi, as every reader of history knows,

is a town on the Adda, in Austrian Italy, containing about 19,000 inhabitants. It was here that Napoleon performed one of the most daring exploits of his early military career by forcing his passage over the bridge, which crossed the Adda River. This battle took place in May, 1796, and was spoken of by Napoleon as "that terrible passage of the Bridge of Lodi". It was this performance in the world's military drama which has given us our simple and concise name — Lodi.

Maurice Hill looked through succeeding issues of the *Cyclone* to see if there were any denials from the men who were said to have named the town or from other old-timers. He could find no mention whatsoever that this early history was ever questioned in any way. That in itself is significant.

The oldest history of San Joaquin County, published in 1879 by Thompson and West, gives no solution to the debate, only mentioning what is already widely known. Likewise, the later history of San Joaquin County, published in 1890 under L. W. Shippee, mentions the problem but briefly and adds nothing new worth recording.

Tinkham's 1923 book quotes George E. Lawrence, "that the name was suggested by the historic event of Napoleon at the Bridge of Lodi." Others say, that in jest, it was named after a famous four-mile running stallion, stabled in the town of Lodi,

the sporting center, at the time.

Why the four-letter name of Lodi? Nobody knows for sure. Take your pick!

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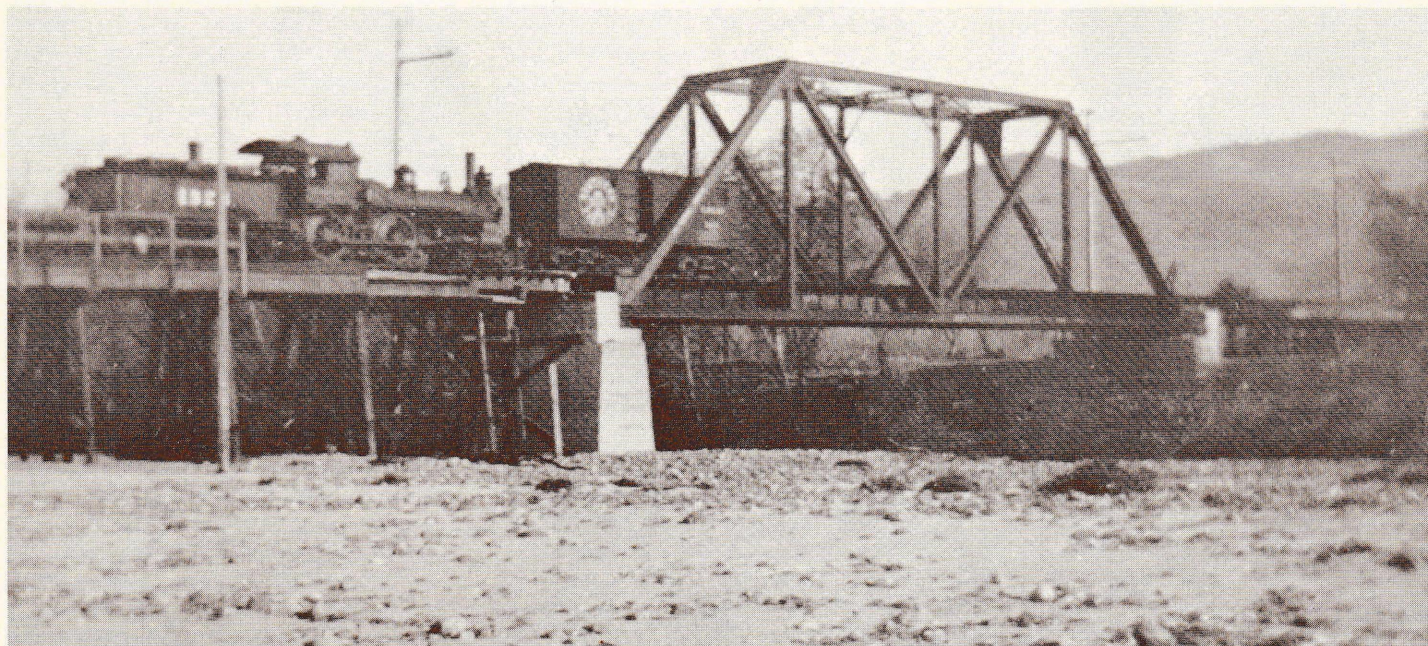
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The difficulties encountered while building the railroad trestle across the Mokelumne reminded local inhabitants of Napoleon's historic battle at the bridge of Lodi.





The Big Fire of 1887

North Sacramento Street as it appeared before the devastating fire of 1887. Most buildings were of wooden construction.

by Maurice Hill

Lodi had been warned it would happen! As early as 1881 the Lodi Sentinel was pointing out that Lodi's protection against fire was completely inadequate. In 1884 the Sentinel was predicting a conflagration against which the town would be helpless. And again, in June of 1885, the Lodi paper admonished, "When Lodi burns to the ground, as burn it doubtless will, and the Sentinel office will go with the rest, our only satisfaction will be to go on to the plaza, and as we wipe the smoke and ashes out of our eyes say, 'The Sentinel has warned you of this during the last four years!'"

About this time, Miss Lizzie Theile spotted a fire at Martin and Rowland's machine shop and planing mill located on the northeast corner of Pine and School streets. Ten more minutes would have proven sufficient to give it a start which might have reduced the town to ashes. This was the second time Lizzie and her mother gave warnings that saved the town from a disastrous fire.

The morning of October 11, 1887 began as uneventfully as the preceding day. Lem, the engineer at Martin and Rowland's Planing Mill, told how he had shut down the engine when the twelve o'clock whistle blew. He then went down into the engine room and took a careful look through the mill as

was his usual custom before going to lunch. Mr. Martin, one of the owners of the planing mill had likewise made a tour of inspection to see that everything was all right.

In 20 minutes, Williams returned from lunch and saw the roof of the mill was ablaze. He was unable to advance a theory as to how the fire originated, but he did not think it was from the engine. There had been some trouble with the hot box during the forenoon, but Williams didn't think this had anything to do with the fire. Other parties, however, thought differently, and some expressed their opinion that the fire was caused by the hot box and first started in a pile of shavings.

As soon as the whistle was blown on the Lodi Flour Mill indicating fire, the cry of "Fire! Fire!" reverberated through the streets and the town's populace was soon out en masse.

It so happened that on this particular morning a strong west wind was blowing. Thus, fanned by the breeze, the blaze became a raging fire and quickly spread to the buildings east of it. The fire was said to have been first noticed at 12:20 p.m. and in three quarters of an hour Lodi's principal business block, which lay on Sacramento Street between Pine and Elm streets, was a smoldering mass of ruins. Only two buildings remained standing, the Granger's store on the

southwest corner of Sacramento and Pine and the Hill building which was a one story brick structure. However, the latter building was completely gutted.

The conflagration first spread from the planing mill to the blacksmith shop of Mr. A. Prater, next door and from there to the home of C. A. Rich. All pumps in the vicinity were pressed into service and buckets were in demand, but all efforts were unavailing. Soon the flames reached the grocery store of C. A. Rich, in the Ivory building, on the northwest corner of Sacramento and Pine streets. It proceeded northward to the Hill building and from there continued northward lapping up the many wooden structures in its path.

From the beginning of the fire, the people of Lodi responded nobly, working heroically to save what was possible from the impending disaster.

The piano and most of the furniture from the home of Mr. Rich was removed to safety and most of his stock of merchandise was also carried out of the burning store. As volunteers realized the impossibility of keeping the fire from spreading north, all their energies were turned to saving The Sargent House (hotel) on the southwest corner of Sacramento and Pine streets for, if this building burned another block would go with it.

L. Matteson, Scott Eckers, and others went on the roof of the hotel with buckets and by dipping them in the water tank at the north end of the building and passing the water to one of the men stationed on the ridge pole of the building, the fire was extinguished as fast as it caught on.

When the threatened danger had passed, the proprietor of The Sargent House showed his appreciation of the services rendered him by abolishing the tax on liquor and dispensing beverages freely to the thirsty firemen.

As the fire traveled northward, there was an all-out and successful effort to save the Granger's Co-operative Business Association building at the extreme north end of the block.

In the basement was stored a small quantity of powder, oil and miscellaneous items. The powder was removed at once.

The lower story was a general merchandise store and in the rear part of the building was the office of the Lodi Sentinel. The only windows on the south side of the building were in the basement. There were formerly windows in the upper story, but these had been bricked up two years previously. The basement windows were barricaded with crockery.

Freda Nesbit in her local history relates that the townspeople took horse blankets from the store's stock, soaked them in the watering trough which stood to the east across Sacramento Street, and put them over the window opening thus shutting out the destructive fire.

West of the building was the home of Mrs. A. C. Meeker which was saved by a fortunate circumstance. Just as the house was taking fire, the joist supporting the nearby water tank gave way and, the tank being filled with water, its contents deluged the premises, dashing against the house and extinguishing the blaze. Had it burned, the west wind would probably have transferred the fire to the Granger's store as there were several windows in the rear. Probably this also saved the next door home of S. N. Woods. Both Mr. Woods and Mrs. Meeker lost their barns.

Had the Granger's store been fired,

it is most likely that two more blocks would have become involved, among them, the Lodi Flouring Mill and warehouses, for the fire would have spread from the Granger's store to the post office, restaurant and R. L. Graham's drug store and would have found plenty of material for further ravages.

C. A. Rich transported his saved merchandise to a place of safety, he being about the only one to save much of value. Several kegs of beer and bottles of liquor were regarded as public property and the crowd helped itself

"The Sentinel has warned you of this during the last four years."

to what it regarded as its own with great good nature. A quarter of beef rescued from the butcher shop was roasted, though not very choicely. Several persons cut off and ate chunks of the meat. But those who preferred roast chicken and pork to beef could also gratify their tastes for where the butcher shop had formerly stood, lay two roasted hogs. About six dozen chickens, the property of John Mundell, were also roasted. Many of the fowls were gathered up by the boys and taken to the saloon where the barkeepers were forced to treat, taking the birds in liquidation, or not, just as they pleased.

One old timer related that when the fire menaced one of the dwellings, the occupant emerged carrying his precious burden, a well-filled pot.

Ollie Smith, son of Lodi's first butcher, W. D. Smith, told me that when his father saw that his shop was going to be consumed, he took off his apron and threw it in, saying, "If everything else is going, that might as well go, too."

Edith Ivory Henning related that when the Granger building was in the line of the fire, the lodge chairs were removed and brought to the Ivory home for safe keeping. She said she and other children in the neighborhood had great fun in playing with them.

Another widely circulated story was that Mrs. J. J. Collins, wife of Lodi's first hardware man, became so nervous and confused that she carried an armful of pillows down the stairs, then went back and threw down a tablecloth or sheet filled with dishes. One old-timer I interviewed claimed to have seen this personally. However, this must have happened, if at all, during a subsequent fire for there was no second story to the Collins' building at this time. On the other hand, if the Collins family resided in the second story of one of the other adjacent buildings, it could be possible.

G. W. Hill who lost his jewelry store in the fire was in Maine when it happened. He had gone in September for a visit with his mother and sisters in the east. He had left his young wife, Mary E. Hill, in charge of the business.

When it became apparent that the store would go along with other properties, people began to come to the store with the intention of carrying out the merchandise. Mrs. Hill bolted the door so no one could get in. Then she, aided by her younger sister, Daisy M. Pleas, placed all the jewelry in the big safe. Then, they carried silverware, etc. out the back door and deposited it in



Residents salvage belongings from the still-smoldering ruins. The brick structure in the background was one of few left standing.



The fire of 1887 may have leveled the original Sacramento Street, but it proved a boon to the growing town. The business district was soon rebuilt with more permanent, fireproof bricks replacing the original wooden structures.

a wheelbarrow which Daisy promptly took up to the Hill residence on School Street. When everything possible had been cared for, Mrs. Hill opened up the doors and people thronged in helping to remove pieces of furniture, etc. That it took presence of mind to accomplish the foregoing is evident and no doubt was the means of saving much of the goods from theft.

After the fire one of the local businessmen approached Mrs. Hill and offered to bank money and jewelry for her. She gave him a box to deposit and in due time it was returned to her. What she hadn't told the man that deposited the valuables for her was that the only things in the box which she had entrusted him with were some rocks. The real valuables reposed in the safe which went down in the basement of the store. Later when the safe was raised, its contents were found intact.

Incidentally, the large showcase, for the display of silverware, which G. W. Hill had made himself were too large to be removed and were destroyed in the fire. When the store was rebuilt in 1888, new showcases replaced them but were not of his workmanship.

The train from Stockton stopped near West's vineyard to take aboard a large force of laborers to help fight the fire, but by the time they arrived, the fire had done its worst. As the train arrived at the Lodi depot, knots of men, women, and children could be seen standing together gazing at the fire

which was slowly diminishing.

The complete loss of property was estimated at \$70,000.00 which seems a small amount, indeed, in these present inflationary times. It was estimated that insurance coverages would not aggregate more than \$17,000.00

Following are the estimates of losses after the disastrous fire:

Martin and Rowland planing mill, valued at \$6,000.00 and insured for \$2,500.00. With the mill was burned about \$4,000.00 worth of lumber of the Lodi lumber company. Mr. A. Prater: blacksmith shop, loss about \$300.00. C. A. Rich: dwelling and furnishings, damage \$3,000.00, insured for \$1,000.00. C. A. Richard: general merchandise store, loss \$6,000.00, insurance \$2,000.00. C. O. Ivory: building housing the above store, valued at \$1,000.00 and covered by insurance.

G. W. Hill: building and stock, damage uncertain, but will probably aggregate \$2,500.00, insurance unknown. J. J. Collins: building and stock of hardware, loss \$4,900, insurance \$1,000.00. H. Marken: building, saloon and fixtures, loss \$2,500.00, insurance \$1,000.00. A. C. Chambers, building and restaurant, loss \$3,000.00, insurance \$1,500.00. G. Peirano: merchandise loss \$4,800.00, insurance \$2,000.00.

W. D. Smith & Sons: butcher shop, loss \$2,500.00, insurance had just expired and the firm had neglected to renew it. Thompson & Folger of Wood-

bridge: building, loss \$500.00. Lee & Julien: saloon, loss \$1,200.00, insurance \$500.00. Mrs. Lambert: building and improvements, loss \$2,000.00, insurance \$1,000.00. George F. Cluff: real estate office, loss \$150.00. Hanson & Co's drug store: loss \$700.00. Mrs. A. L. Wack: two buildings, loss \$500.00. Mrs. R. N. Willing: millinery store, loss \$500.00. Richard Cope: two buildings and stock of harness, loss \$1,200.00.

Robert Cope: building, loss \$300.00. J. H. McSherry: real estate and grocery business, loss \$1,000.00. Mrs. G. B. Ralph: building, loss \$300.00. J. Reiffel: Lodi agent of the Stockton Independent, loss \$150.00. A. J. Larson, real estate office, loss \$150.00. Estate of S.N. Woods: 2 barns, one filled with hay, loss \$1,000.00. Mrs. A. C. Meeker: barn filled with hay and tankhouse, windmill and wood, loss \$1,200.00.

E. Lawrence: manager of the Granger's Co-operative Business Association, estimates loss to building and stock at \$2,500.00. Covered fully by insurance. Damage mostly caused by water and smoke. The front of the building was damaged considerably and the plate glass was smashed.

Odd Fellows Lodge: loss \$200.00 due to smashing and wetting of furniture and carpets. Campbell & Beasley, architects: fixtures and papers, loss \$200.00. Lodi Sentinel office: damage uncertain.

About 4:00 p.m. on the same day of the fire, an impromptu meeting was held in front of the Sargent house. It was presided over by Watson C. Green. On a motion, T. W. Dougherty, F. E. Ellis and W. C. Green were appointed a Protection Committee. They decided to appoint sixteen special patrolmen to take turns in watching the burned area during the night.

It was the general sentiment that nothing was lost by the fire. "Yes," said one citizen of the watermelon hamlet, "it is the best thing that ever happened to the town. People have learned something — in a short time you'll see the block rebuilt and, substantially. We'll have a boom which we couldn't have had before for people will not invest money where there is no protection from fire. We will now probably have a fire department. Yes, God in His mysterious way is helping along the boom."